English Apples and Pears

The Family Fruit

WHAT IS AN APPLE ?

An apple is one of nature's oldest and most widely grown fruits . . . it is also a member of the *rose* family.

Although recognised from antiquity for its nutritional value it is only in recent times that we have actually discovered how beneficial an apple really is.

Apples are thought to have originated in South-West Asia almost where historians place the Garden of Eden; but whether the apple that tempted Eve measured up to present day standards is doubtful in the light of historical evidence. Fossilised apples found in excavations and the drawings on cave walls indicate that the earliest apples were about as large and as tasty as crab apples. Less is known of the history of pears, but we can assume that prehistoric man viewed apples and pears in much the same light and traces of the fruit have been found in Swiss lake dwellings.

With the passing of time improvements came about, for the Greek and Roman myths refer to apples as symbols of love and beauty and today we call something we prize "the apple of our eye". In fact it was the Romans who introduced apples into Britain during the first century A.D. The trees they brought from Gaul grew well, and the monasteries which preserved the civilisation of Rome throughout the Dark Ages maintained the orchards.

It was Henry VIII's enthusiasm for apples and pears and the interest in producing new varieties which resulted in the growing of fruit much like we enjoy today. These developments led to fruit growing becoming an established occupation in this country by the end of the seventeenth century.

The Science and Art of Fruit Growing is called Pomology

Over 6,000 true varieties of apple are listed as having been grown in Great Britain during the last 100 years; but as time has passed only a few have become firm favourites. Perhaps the most famous is the Cox's Orange Pippin. The apples we eat do not grow on trees raised from seed, that is from the apple pips, they are propagated by grafting or budding. All the Cox's Orange Pippin trees in the world for instance, are descended from cuttings originally taken from the first tree Mr. Cox, a retired brewer, grew in a flower pot in 1830.

The Bramley cooking apple also originated in a similar way. In 1805 a little girl planted an apple pip in the garden of a Nottinghamshire cottage. No one knew the origin of the pip but it took root and the fruit became extremely popular locally and during the next fifty years she gave away many cuttings. Today, in Britain alone, nearly three million Bramley trees flourish and the mother tree from which Bramleys in hundreds of millions of apple pies can trace their origin, still exists and blossoms each year.

Despite the development of apple and pear growing overseas, this country still keeps its lead in growing techniques. British research in the present century, for instance, has revolutionised cultivation methods to such an extent that two-and-a-half apples are now grown all over the world, where only one was produced less than 30 years ago. Methods of fruit production now yield apples and pears which are more standard in size and are better in flavour, texture and colour. Fruit growing is no longer the haphazard business of "plant it and chance it".

Few people realise the endless year-round care that is taken by the English fruit grower in ensuring that we have a wide selection in the shops of good quality apples and pears. The grower starts with planting and pruning during the winter months; weed control, grass cutting, cultivating during summer; culminating with picking, grading and packing during the autumn. His battle against bird damage, insects and disease is a continuous one, as are his problems when dealing with the possibility of spring frost, summer hail and autumn gales.

Consequently, growing good quality fruit requires not only expertise and good fortune, but also a heavy financial investment – approximately £750 per acre is needed to establish an orchard and then annually £350 an acre to maintain the orchard for a long period even before it yields a crop. A fruit grower is always planning a half a generation ahead, for a newly planted orchard will not bear a commercial crop for five to ten years and with his costs will not be profitable until he has had several good harvests. Small wonder therefore that the price for apples and pears must be sufficient to finance all this.

'An Apple a Day Keeps the Doctor Away'

FOLKLORE OR FACT?

A phrase lost in time, but certainly when it was coined it could not have been based on medical fact. Now with modern research new evidence suggests that the adage has more than a grain of truth.

Apples and pears have natural sugars that are easily digested and provide energy without harming the teeth.

The juice of an apple also tones up your digestion. It has the vitamins and minerals needed for healthy cells and tissues.

Tooth Decay

An apple is "nature's toothbrush" . . . it reduces the chance of surface bacteria, cleans the teeth and massages the gums.

Unfortunately we have a bad record of tooth decay in this country; there is no doubt the main culprit is the large amount of sugary food we eat. In fact we are the second biggest consumers of sweets, chocolates and confectionery in the world.

Scientifically, what the apple is doing is making more saliva in your mouth which cleans your teeth. At the same time chewing an apple strengthens the gums which many of the foods we eat are making soft. Small wonder your dentist is keen on the apple-eating habit and not so readily enthusiastic about sweet eating.

Regularity

The shortage of rough fibrous tissue in our food is a point that is at present worrying nutritionists and dieticians. Roughage is vital in keeping the intestinal tract efficient and lack of it is a cause of many dietary complaints. Constipation and even diarrhoea are common problems. The sensible way to put roughage in our food? Fresh fruit and vegetables.

And the fact that apples and pears have a higher fibre content than much of the fruit and vegetables we eat, makes them an essential to our daily diet.

OVERWEIGHT?

A current practice, amongst numerous methods of losing weight, is to fill the stomach with substances high in bulk but low or negligible in calories. One substance regularly used is methylcellulose, which is the chief constituent in many proprietary slimming aids.

Apples contain methylcellulose – what is more laboratory trials recently carried out proved that an apple had three times the filling power of even the best of the methylcellulose products tested!

Now an "Apple Action Diet" has been devised which includes an English apple eaten fifteen minutes before each meal plus one extra apple to help with that common evening-hunger problem . . . FOUR APPLES A DAY. In tests the apple diet programme produced weight losses up to a remarkable 19½ lb in a month.

An average-sized English apple contains only 40 calories – and it's the sweetness in English apples that also helps prevent a build-up craving for the very sweet, high calorie foods.

Slim or keep in trim with the "English Apple Diet" which is freely available from the Apple and Pear Development Council.

Remember...

Apples and pears contain modest amounts of nearly all the most important nutrients and because of their universal flavour appeal, versatility and convenience for use, nutritionists and dieticians rate them high on the list for eating right and staying fit. It is even established medically that apples are beneficial in reducing blood pressure and thus alleviating problems associated with this condition. Apples and pears are good for your teeth, your stomach, your skin and complexion, your smile, your overall health. That's why we say English apples and pears are good – and good for you.

How to Keep Your Apples

Few things are nicer to look at than a bowl of fruit on a sideboard or table. What is often forgotten is that a hot room can dramatically and very quickly affect the quality of the fruit. Ideally, ripe apples should be eaten soon after they are bought. However, they can be kept in good condition if placed in the cool where there is little temperature variation. To bring back their true flavour bring them out into the warmth just before eating.

HOW TO SHOP FOR APPLES & PEARS

Too many bruises . . . decay spots . . . indicate that the fruit is too ripe or has been poorly handled. Don't pinch . . . you may add another bruise! However slight roughness doesn't spoil quality or flavour.

Eating apples come in all shades of reds, yellows and greens . . . so don't just look for a red colour to tell you that an apple is prime for eating.

Immature?

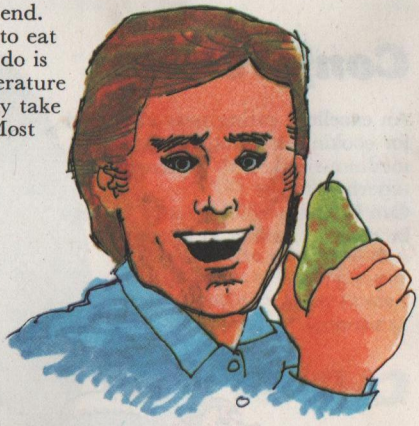
Too green ground colour . . . will have poor flavour . . . too starchy and hard.

Over-ripe?

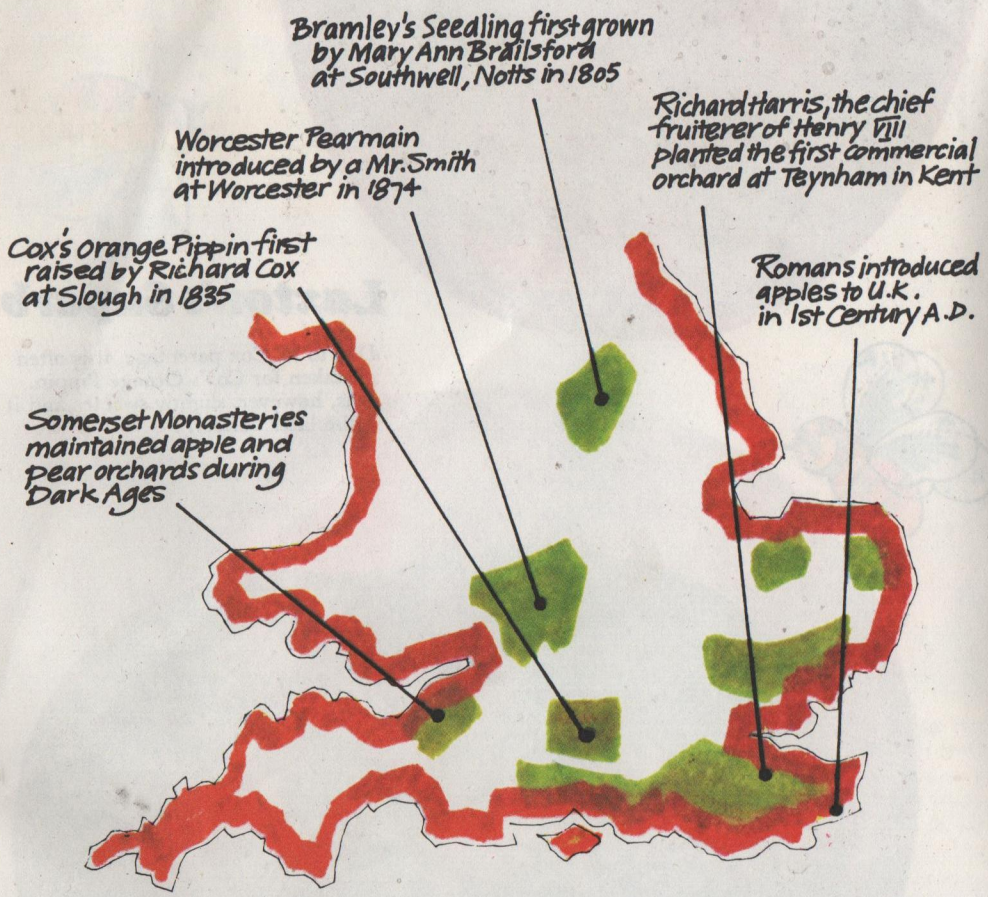
Too yellow ground colour . . . should have greenish tinge . . . will have poor flavour and soft mealy texture.

How to Choose and Ripen Pears at Home

Pears that are ripe yield to slight pressure at the stalk end. They are, however, often sold when they are too firm to eat and therefore need ripening at home. All you have to do is keep them where there is an even warm, humid temperature day and night; an airing cupboard is ideal. It will only take a day or so to ripen pears to their prime, juicy best. Most important of all, keep them away from draughts and fluctuating temperatures.



THE APPLE AND PEAR DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL,
Union House, The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 8HF


Bramley's Seedling first grown by Mary Ann Brailsford at Southwell, Notts in 1805
Worcester Pearmain introduced by a Mr. Smith at Worcester in 1874
Richard Harris, the chief fruiterer of Henry VIII planted the first commercial orchard at Teynham in Kent
Cox's Orange Pippin first raised by Richard Cox at Slough in 1835
Romans introduced apples to U.K. in 1st Century A.D.
Somerset Monasteries maintained apple and pear orchards during Dark Ages

Main Growing Areas for Apples and Pears

Choosing Quality

To help you choose your apples and pears there are now labels in the shops which tell you about fruit quality.

There are two qualities – Class 1 and Class 2: look for these quality markings – your retailer should grade every apple and pear into either category.

Class 1: means good quality – the flesh must be free from any deterioration and without any blemishes that will impair the general appearance.

Class 2: still an acceptable quality but the skin may have a few blemishes that take it out of Class 1.

Availability

NOW – Science has discovered how to make apples and pears "breathe" more slowly . . . and stay fresh longer in storage!

Nearly all the English apples and pears we buy after Christmas come from storage.

BUT . . . scientists have found that atmosphere also affects apple and pear "ageing" and have "created" a way to control the air in storage to slow fruit "breathing" and keep them fresh and crisp for more months in the year.

"Controlled Atmosphere" Storage checks apple and pear "ageing" by controlling *both* temperature and atmosphere in special storage rooms.

The amount of carbon dioxide (CO_2) in the store is allowed to increase . . . the apples and pears "breathe" more slowly . . . thus ripen or "age" more slowly . . . in air conditioned comfort . . . keep fresh and crisp months longer . . . and you can buy them more months of the year.

CALENDAR OF AVAILABILITY IN THE SHOPS — LIGHT SUPPLY PART MONTH · LIGHT SUPPLY · MEDIUM SUPPLY · HEAVY SUPPLY

Dessert Varieties	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
MILLERS SEEDLING			●	◔								
TYDEMANS EARLY			●	●								
WORCESTER PEARMAIN			◔	●	●	●	○					
LAXTON FORTUNE			◔	●	●	○	○					
LORD LAMBOURNE				◔	●	●	◔					
COX'S ORANGE PIPPIN				◔	●	●	●	●	●	●		
EGREMONT RUSSET				◔	●	●	●					
LAXTON SUPERB					○	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Cooking Varieties												
GRENADIER		◔	●	●								
LORD DERBY			◔	●	●	●						
BRAMLEY'S SEEDLING	◔		◔	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○
Pears												
CONFERENCE				◔	●	●	●	●	●	○		
COMICE					○	●	●	●	○			

Miller's Seedling

A pale yellow apple.
Miller's Seedling is crisp, juicy and sharp flavoured. Available in all sizes, the small ones are ideal for children. AUGUST

Taste the flavour of England

Worcester Pearmain

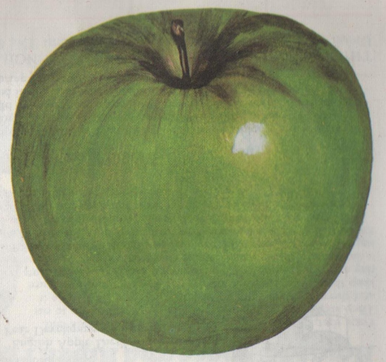
A rich red apple with some pale green streaks; very juicy and sweet. Worcesters should be eaten as soon as possible after purchase.
SEPTEMBER–NOVEMBER

Cox's Orange Pippin

The finest-flavoured of all apples. The colour of Cox is variable, usually palish green with orange to red flush; the brown russet marks around the stem are superficial and do not affect the flesh of the apple. LATE SEPTEMBER–APRIL.

Crispin

A recently introduced variety with a Japanese parentage. It is a large yellowy green apple with a very good flavour. The supply is increasing each year.
DECEMBER–APRIL



Grenadier

A round, flattish apple with a yellowish green smooth skin. Makes a really good cooking apple early in the season. AUGUST–SEPTEMBER

Discovery

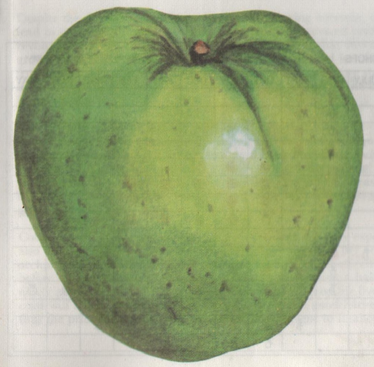
Discovery is a much sought after new apple. It has a bright red skin with yellow streaks, is firm and juicy and keeps well on the sideboard.
AUGUST–SEPTEMBER

Egremont Russet

A rare, delicious apple, easy to recognise by its russet brown skin with orange blush. It is medium-sized and crisp, with a nutty flavour.
OCTOBER–DECEMBER

Tydeman's Early

Very like a Worcester but redder, larger, rounder and less conical in shape.
It is juicy and sweet-scented. AUGUST–SEPTEMBER



Lord Derby

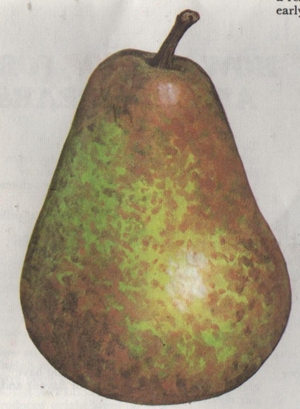
Lord Derby has a distinctive shape, slightly conical with pronounced "ribs". A fine cooking apple which fills the gap between Grenadier and Bramleys, which it resembles closely in colour. SEPTEMBER–NOVEMBER

Laxton's Superb

Due to its Cox parentage, it is often mistaken for Cox's Orange Pippin. It is, however, slightly sweeter and it is the later variety. NOVEMBER–APRIL

Bramley's Seedling

Bramleys are the best known of English cooking apples, are ideal for stewing and especially for baking. Have a deep green waxy skin, sometimes with a slight orange-red flush. OCTOBER–JUNE



Comice

Comice has a superb flavour, being sweet and juicy under its tough skin and literally melts in the mouth.
NOVEMBER–DECEMBER

Conference

An excellent eating pear also good for cooking and bottling. It is medium-sized, with an irregular, tapering shape.
Can be eaten when "nutty" or can be ripened further at home.
OCTOBER–FEBRUARY